

LEADERSHIP.

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THERE never was any great movement in this world without a leader; and in the nature of things there cannot be. As nature bestows upon men a variety of gifts, it follows that some have clearer views than others of what best advances the interests of any cause. And the best good of all interested in any given object will be attained by intelligently following the counsels of those best qualified to guide. There never can be real union of counsel and action without the judgment of some person is regarded of importance and special weight. While the minds of men are so various and contradictory, and while the counsels of some would lead to destruction, success will be apt to attend that movement which closely follows the suggestions of those whom experience teaches give intelligent and judicious advice.

A true leader represents and embodies the views and will of those who follow his counsels. His success is their success. The difference between the true leader and the tyrant is this: While the latter exercises influence and authority to gratify his own wishes or caprice, the former labors for the good of those he represents, and to carry into effect their wishes.

Never can much be accomplished in any movement until those interested become settled in their minds that the one of their choice is worthy of their confidence and support. Confusion will mark their counsels, and their strength will be wasted in laboring to no purpose, or in opposite directions. Efficiency is the result of wise leadership. All, therefore, who are interested in the success of any cause are interested in the success of the ones they have chosen to lead out. They represent

the united interests of all. And in supporting them they are really supporting their own cause.

An intelligent support of leaders is best obtained when confidence is founded on past faithfulness, and sufficient evidence of fitness, or by reliable evidence of God's special selection. And when all these are combined, the evidence in the case is overwhelming. When plans are made, somebody must make them, and carry them into effect; and it is self-evident to all that those should do this who give most evidence of fitness. And the success of all interested will most certainly be obtained by a careful attention to the counsel of such.

It is fully believed that the facts of history and the declarations of God's word show the truthfulness of the above principles. The Bible authorizes the existence of human governments. And what are governments but an application of these principles among mankind? What would an army be without a leader? What would a government be if all concerned in its administration were of equal authority? What would it accomplish if all were captains, equal in command? The whole economy of God, as brought to view in the Bible and in all his providential dealings with the race, recognizes this principle. There is not a single important movement spoken of in Scripture in which there was not some person chosen to lead out. Noah, Moses, Joshua, Samuel, Jephthah, Samson, Gideon, Deborah, David, the different kings, Ezra, Nehemiah, and many other persons in the Old Testament might be mentioned as leaders in important movements, while John the Baptist and Christ's apostles furnish examples of similar leadership in the New. And in every great religious movement since their time, God's providence has plainly shown the fact of his selection of proper instruments to accomplish his work. We are free to grant that these have been weak, fallible men, with human infirmities. But this matters not so long as we

have plain evidence that God chooses to work by such means.

An objection may be raised here that the spirit of the New Testament is against this idea because it is repeatedly stated that Christ is the head of the church, and because our Saviour says, "But ye not called Rabbi, for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father which is in Heaven. Neither be ye called masters; for one is your Master, even Christ. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant; and whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased, and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted." Matt. 23:8-12. We are as ready to grant the full force of these statements as any. But such a view of them should be taken as will harmonize with other scriptures and with Christ's own appointment.

There is a plain rebuke here to man-worship, and seeking for ourselves honors and titles from men, which is so natural to the human heart. Man is nothing, only as God honors him. And the one he honors is the one who will labor most, and sacrifice most, in his cause. It is not for us to seek place and position for our own aggrandizement. This we are forbidden to do. Christ is the head of all his people. His life must be our example. His Spirit must be our guide. He is the one we must follow. No man must pretend to take his place, or take honors to himself which belong to Christ.

But does it follow from this that there is no authority in the Christian church? that all are exactly upon a level so far as position is concerned? Has Christ forbidden the church to assign to those best qualified to guide and direct any office of authority or influence? Let his word decide this point. "And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples; and of them he chose twelve, whom also he called apostles." Luke :13. When he sent them out, he gave them especial instructions and authority. As he closed his

charge to them, he said, "He that receiveth you receiveth me; and he that receiveth me, receiveth Him that sent me." Matt. 10:40.

The word apostle signifies "one sent with commands or a message."—*Greenfield*. In the ministry of Christ, he saw fit to choose just twelve. But the office was not confined to just those persons originally chosen, for upon the apostasy of Judas, Matthias was set apart to fill the vacancy. "And the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles." Acts 1:26. Neither was the office confined to just twelve, for Paul and Barnabas are expressly called apostles. They were first solemnly set apart to the work for which God had called them. Acts 13:2. And as they went forward in this work, the inspired record says, "Which, when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of, they rent their clothes and ran in among the people," &c. Acts 14:14. Paul is many times called an apostle. Christ himself is also called an apostle. "Consider the apostle and high priest of our profession, Christ Jesus. Heb. 3:1. And in the original, others are called so. "Yet I supposed it necessary to send unto you Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labor, and fellow-soldier, but your messenger." Phil. 2:25. The word messenger in the original is "*apostolos*," the very word from which apostle is translated. Paul therefore called him an apostle. When Titus and the "brother whose praise was in all the churches," and others, were sent to Corinth to attend to things there, Paul speaks of them as follows: "Whether any do inquire of Titus, he is my partner and fellow-helper concerning you; or our brethren be inquired of, they are the messengers of the churches, and the glory of Christ." 2 Cor. 8:23. Read connection. In the Greek, the word messenger is the one from which the word *apostle* is always translated. Paul associates Silvanus and Timotheus with himself, in writing the first epistle to the Thessalonians, and expressly calls them apostles. "Nor of men sought we

glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have used authority [margin] as the apostles of Jesus Christ." 1 Thess. 2:6.

From these plain facts, it will readily be seen there is no warrant for confining this office to just those twelve persons originally chosen. As the term signifies "one sent with a message," it seems properly to refer to those specially raised up, and sent out by the providence or Spirit of God, to act a leading part in his work. It is evidently the highest office in the church, for in Paul's enumeration of the gifts, he says, "And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues." 1 Cor. 12:28. When he says, "first apostles," he must refer to authority or position. Neither is there any intimation that these were designed to continue only for a brief period. On the contrary, the connection plainly intimates they were designed to continue with the church. And in Eph. 4:11, Paul expressly states that apostles, prophets, pastors, evangelists, and teachers, were placed in the church for the same object, and to continue the same length of time.

While we are therefore willing to freely admit that Christ is "head of the church," we must also conclude that some men are placed higher in authority in the church than others. There seems to have been a special precedence existing even among the apostles themselves. Peter, James, and John, were often the special companions of the Saviour himself, and shared most in his special counsels. And Paul, who reckoned himself not a whit behind the chiefest apostles, did, on a certain occasion, think it best to lay matters before these principal men. "Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also. And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had

run, in vain. . . . They who seemed to be somewhat, in conference added nothing to me. But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter; (for he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles;) and when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision." Gal. 2:1-9.

Some interesting facts are here stated bearing on this question. Paul, though a special instrument raised up by miracle, thought it advisable to consult with those highest in authority among the circumcision, lest he had "run in vain." But these "pillars" in the church, led by the same Spirit which led Paul, perceived that God, in his providence, had specially appointed and qualified him for his work among the Gentiles. God had given Peter a special position in the work among the Jews. He had all he could do there. So he raised up Paul for another special position. Here was no conflict. Each was to work in his special sphere. But some were higher in position than others, and that by God's appointment. God carries on his work upon the same general principles in all ages. And we have every reason to believe that he has raised up special instruments all the way down to the present time to carry on his work. Luther, Wesley, William Miller, and others, we believe were such. Yet Christ is head of his people at the same time. He works through these agents, and leads them to exert a strong influence upon others; and thus, far more is accomplished for man's salvation than could be were none especially led by him.

But if there are those who still think no man is ever authorized to exert any authority in the Christian church, and that all stand upon a level, let such care-

fully consider the following scriptures: "Obey them that have the *rule* over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you." Heb. 13:17. The word in the Greek rendered *rule*, Greenfield defines to mean, "to lead the way, to be over," i. e., have authority over, be leader, chief; to preside, govern, rule." Obedience is to be rendered to such, and submission. "Let the elders that *rule* well, be counted worthy of double honor," &c. 1 Tim. 5:17. Here the word rendered *rule*, Mr. Greenfield says means, to set over, to appoint with authority. In giving directions to Timothy and Titus, two gospel ministers, the apostle Paul defines their duties as follows: "Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear." 1 Tim. 5:20. "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, . . . preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine." 2 Tim. 4:1, 2. "Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith." "These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee." Titus 1:13, and 2:15. These scriptures are sufficient to show that there is authority placed upon some in the Christian church, if human language can show anything. Those who object to this must object to the Bible, for these passages are quoted from that book. This authority is not contrary to the leadership of Christ, but by his direct appointment, and can only be exercised by those who are appointed by his direction, and who live in harmony with his Spirit. When they cease to do this, none are under obligation to obey them.

While it is thus seen necessary, and in accordance with Christ's appointment, that certain ones should exercise authority and influence in the church in ordinary times, there are occasions when God evidently designs to accomplish a special work, and to this end

raises up special agencies to carry out his design. The natural tendency of humanity is downward, and during the six thousand years of man's history while the great controversy with sin has been going on, there have been different epochs in which God has seen fit to make a special manifestation of his power for the purpose of causing his truth to take more effect upon the hearts of men. These epochs have been after long periods of backsliding and settling down in the public mind, until some of the great principles of God's government were lost sight of. Then the Lord raised up agents, and prepared them to go forth and give the message to the people, which was necessary that his truth perish not from the earth. The preaching of Noah, the leading out of Israel by Moses, the work of Elijah, and several of the prophets, the preparing of the way by John the Baptist, the work of the apostles, and other reform movements since the Dark Ages, are illustrations of these special movements of God. These come in the time of religious declension, and are always unpopular. Through them, the loyalty of man to his Creator is tested. He shows by his conduct whether he loves the down-trodden truth of God most, or the approbation of the world.

The responsibility of leading out in such a work is great, not to say fearful. Nothing short of special instruction by the Spirit of God can qualify feeble man to do it. When God calls a person to this position, and the one called works with his counsel, it is no small thing to hinder him in his work. Doing so, really works against God, who has made him his agent. We must acknowledge this to be true, or deny that God ever does work by special agencies. In carrying forward such movements, perfect union among those in leading positions is most important to success. Without it, success is next to impossible. Satan and all his allies will do their utmost to hinder God's special work, and in no way can he work more successfully than by hindering and discouraging those who have a

leading part to act. These, being weak and fallible men, are exposed to his temptations, and can only overcome them by walking in the counsel of God. When they fully do this, God's arm will support them, and those not willing to receive their testimony, or, who stand in the way of their work, will certainly bring upon themselves the frown of God.

One illustration from the Bible will suffice. The case of Moses is in point, because we have a particular account of his life and trials, and because the apostle Paul informs us that the dealings of God with Israel under the leadership of Moses were examples or types for the admonition of those living in the last days. He was specially prepared for his ministry by his experience in exile where he learned humility and how to walk with God. In every instance when that people murmured against him (and they were many), it was counted as murmuring against God. Why? Simply because God had chosen him and instructed him. He chose to lead his mind, and talked with him. They had evidence of this, and yet in every trial they complained of Moses. I think there is not a single instance on record where the people complained directly of God, but only of his servant.

This principle is the same in all ages when we admit that God has chosen to raise up any special agent to accomplish his work. Even wicked Saul, when placed in his position by the providence of God, David dared not to harm. The Lord had placed him there. David had no right to injure him, though the prophet Samuel had anointed David himself to be king. The meekness and respect of David toward wicked Saul, because of his position, is not only one of the most beautiful traits of his character, but clearly shows our duty to respect God's appointments.

I now propose to come to our own cause, and apply these principles. We believe we have the truth of God for the last days—a special message of warning to the world, containing the most fearful threatening in the

Bible, and the principles upon which a grand reform is based, preparatory to Christ's coming. God's down-trodden Sabbath and law must be vindicated by his people, and their majesty proclaimed. The great issue in the closing work turns upon these. The great apostasy which ruled for 1260 years has buried them in the dust. A partial reform in Christendom has not given them their proper position. The final struggle between God and Satan turns upon these. Is not the issue broad enough? important enough? It comes at the close of six thousand years of wickedness, and here the great controversy closes, with the destruction of all wicked men, and the eternal salvation of the righteous. Never in the history of the world was there a movement more important than this. It is clearly foretold in prophecy in many places. It is impossible for us to overestimate the greatness of it. It is the grand point of interest in all revelation. The coming of Christ, the destruction of the wicked, the salvation of the righteous, the purification of the earth, who can sense the magnitude of these events? We profess to be giving a special warning concerning these things. We also profess to believe, as a people, that God has connected with this movement the spirit of prophecy as he said he would with the remnant of the true church. Rev. 12:17. That he should do this is no marvel when we consider the importance of the work. It would be a marvel if he did not. God gives special light, then, to guide his people in this important crisis. And has not God raised up and qualified any agents to lead out in this work? Have no persons any special responsibilities laid upon them in such a time as this? When we reach the closing message of probation, the greatest of all movements, has he placed everybody upon a level, so far as responsibility or authority is concerned, and that contrary to his uniform course for six thousand years? Has God changed? or learned better by experience? I leave others to answer.

I must now make a personal application of these re-

marks; for my subject and object make it necessary. While it is a fact that other men have acted a prominent part in this work more or less, it is well known to all that Elder James White and wife have exerted a leading influence from its rise. If it be true, as stated in the first part of this essay, that "an intelligent support of leaders is best obtained when confidence is founded on past faithfulness and of fitness for the position and on reliable evidence of God's special selection," then, indeed, we, as a people, have overwhelming evidence of their right to act in that capacity. We well know that none have labored with the devotion and earnestness in this cause that they have. Upwards of twenty-five years of faithful effort have settled that point forever. Their efforts began when believers were few and sacrifices great. Such a time tests the genuineness of faith.

As far as their fitness to plan and execute is concerned, the success of this cause thus far has demonstrated that. Never was there a cause, probably, that had more difficulties and obstacles to contend with than this. Foes without and foes within have contended against it. Rising, as it did, from the disappointment of 1844 and the disorganized condition of the Advent people, it has been no small thing to bring it to its present state of prosperity. The creation of our publishing and other institutions, and the bringing of them to their present magnitude, is a matter of wonder even to our enemies. We have been laying the foundation slowly, surely, for a great work. It is but just to say that in the accomplishment of these objects, the leadership of Eld. White and wife is incontestable. In every important movement, they have thus far led out. We, as a people, have found their counsels safe, judicious, and effective.

What has the Lord said to us in regard to Bro. White's position especially? I will quote from various testimonies for the benefit of those interested on this point. "I saw that important moves would be made

that would demand our influence to lead out." "I was shown that he was raised up by the Lord and that he lives as a miracle of mercy—not for the purpose of gathering the burdens upon him again under which he has once fallen, but that the people of God might be benefited with his experience in advancing the general interests of the cause, and in connection with the work he has given me, and the burden he has laid upon me."

"I was shown his position to the people of God was similar, in some respects, to that of Moses. There were murmurers against Moses when in adverse circumstances, and there have been murmurers against him. There has been no one in the ranks of Sabbath-keepers who would do as my husband has done."

"God has given my husband especial qualifications, natural ability, and he selected him, and gave him an experience, to lead out his people in the advance work. There have been murmurers among Sabbath-keeping Adventists as was among ancient Israel." It is also said that he should be a "counsellor" to this people. These extracts should be sufficient to prove beyond a doubt to all who have any real faith in this message and in the testimonies of the Spirit of God connected with it, that a leading position in it has been given to him. The providence of God, the experience of our people, the evidence of successful management for twenty-five years of most trying labor, and the positive declarations of the testimonies of God's Spirit, should settle this question forever with every one who has a particle of faith in this message that he is called of the Lord to act as a leader among his people.

This conclusion is reasonable, consistent, and in harmony with God's appointment. His peculiar relation to the one through whom the Lord speaks to this people is such that we could not well conclude otherwise. There is one person among us who has visions which we admit are from Heaven. This fact throws upon her the unpleasant duty of reproving sins and wrongs in many

cases. Her husband is the one whom the providence of God evidently designed should stand by her to back up her testimony and help her in this most important and unpleasant duty. By this close relationship, he has access to light and guidance that others could not have. This consideration points to the same conclusion that I have above expressed.

In view of these positions, what relation to him should those sustain who labor in the same cause? and how should we, as ministers and people, conduct ourselves to carry out the designs of God and labor in harmony with these positions. In short, what is our duty to a leader whom we believe God has appointed?

1. To believe his appointment suitable, otherwise God would never have made it.
2. To believe the person appointed, honest, conscientious, worthy of respect, and one with whom if we do right it will be possible to work in harmony, otherwise he would never have been appointed.
3. To treat him on all occasions with love and respect, and to take hold cheerfully to carry into effect his plans for the progress of the cause, unless they can be shown to conflict with right and the teachings of God's word. Otherwise, his being a leader would amount to nothing.
4. In all matters of expediency connected with the cause, to give his judgment the preference, and cheerfully endeavor to carry it out as fully as though it was our own; for the moment we give our judgment the preference in those things in which God has called him to lead, we place ourselves in the position God has assigned to him.
5. To have a jealous interest for his reputation, knowing that when his reputation is injured, the cause in which he acts as leader is also affected.
6. To put aside a spirit of murmuring and complaint, to listen to his reproof candidly, and bear it with meekness, and honestly endeavor to give it that force it deserves; for in murmuring or refusing to listen to re-

proof, we virtually declare his judgment unworthy of our respect; and we also disobey Scripture.

7. To try cheerfully to assist in counsel and action to the best of our ability, and to take those responsibilities in the cause which are assigned to us by competent authority, and to yield a cordial and hearty support to such as are called to fill the responsible position of leader.

8. To frown down in ourselves or in others a spirit of criticism toward such as we believe God has appointed; for if the plans and conduct of such are to be a constant subject of close criticism, it shows at once that suspicion exists, and that we fear they are unworthy of our confidence; and yet we claim that God has appointed them.

9. To cheerfully admit his authority to reprove and rebuke according to the light God has given him, and we claim no right to call his exercise of it in question; for if amenable to every one for this, it virtually destroys his right altogether, and shows that he has no more right to reprove than others. He must have room to exercise this right without question, so far as his course does not conflict with moral principle. And the duty of his brethren is to support him in it.

These positions may be called, by some, popery, man-worship, and surrendering our right of private judgment, &c. But I confidently believe that they are in perfect harmony with a sensible private judgment and with the word of God. Popery claims supreme control over men's consciences, and full authority to compel obedience to its dictates. Nothing of the kind is claimed in these principles.

Neither are they open to the charge of man-worship. They simply imply the carrying into effect the appointment God has made and which we acknowledge. There is no claim made that the one chosen as leader is infallible, or anything but a man of like passions with ourselves, and constantly exposed to temptations and sin, and in need of divine aid like ourselves at every

step. But the conclusions reached, grow out of the *position* which we admit God has assigned him. Therefore, that position should be respected.

The right of private judgment and of personal accountability to God is not interfered with, but expressly guarded. No one is called upon to do things which violate his conscience in regard to right and wrong, or to make confessions which he does not believe are true.

Nor is there any interference with one's own private matters on the part of a leader authorized by these principles. Each is left perfectly free to act in these directions. But it does give the one acknowledged to be chosen of God to lead out in his cause the authority to fill that position; and it demands of those who acknowledge it respect for that position. And why should not this be so? Has not God a right to call whom he chooses to lead out in his work? Should not all, when they identify themselves with it, recognize that appointment cheerfully, especially when they acknowledge the appointment to have been made? The right of private judgment is not interfered with by so doing, but the act of so doing is an exercise of it.

Popery is the extreme of absolutism. Man's accountability is destroyed by it. The other extreme, of laxity and confusion, is seen in some Protestant churches—no order, no authority, no discipline, but the prevailing spirit is debate and self-assertion. We want to find the happy mean, where true order may be secured.

I fully believe that many of our troubles in the past have arisen from a neglect of some one of these principles; and it is not strange that these principles have been more or less neglected. It would be strange had it been otherwise. Our circumstances have been peculiar. None of us had an experience in these things, but have had it to learn. We cannot wonder that men of ability, with the natural besetments of the human heart and with independence of character, should, with these principles measurably undefined, come from time

to time in collision. I think the time has come when there should be a better understanding of the principles which should govern us in our mutual relations in reference to the position that God has assigned us. This is written in the hope of aiding in this. I look forward with eager interest to a point in this work when perfect union will exist among those whom God has called to leading positions, when we shall move on in perfect order and harmony in our several spheres of action, like a well-drilled army, each officer and private in his place, with the leaders of God's appointment guiding by their counsel, and Christ, our captain over all and above all, giving us the victory. Then indeed will God's people be "terrible as an army with banners."

Our great Southern rebellion serves as a good illustration. In the first stage of the war, there was no real head, no general to whom all looked with respect. The result was, divided counsels, laboring at cross-purposes, and slow progress. When Gen. Grant was appointed commander-in-chief, and the different corps were officered by those who would heed his counsels, there was union of effort, general success, and final victory.

What we most need is real union among leading men. This must be an intelligent union upon principle. We must put away distrust, draw together, shut the devil out of the camp by following the light God has given us, feel an interest for each other's reputation, and especially for those who stand in the forefront of the battle, cordially support the leaders God has appointed, and then victory will crown our efforts. Amen.

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Battle Creek, Mich., Nov. 14, 1873.

We heartily concur in the sentiments of this essay.

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the people churches of this